

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE CHILD CARE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Child Care Quality Improvement Act of 1999. As more and more families with infants and young children are forced to send both parents to work, the need for child care—especially infant care and care at non-traditional hours—continues to expand. As the need for care grows however, startling findings in a study on the cost and quality of child care by the University of Colorado at Denver's Department of Economics report that more than 80% of child care services in the U.S. is thought to be of poor or average quality.

I want to make sure we're not missing the mark. Although it is true that child care is in short supply and is too expensive for many families to afford, we must not allow the demand for child care services to override the need for quality. It is critical that children receive care that promotes their healthy growth and development. We cannot allow them to be placed in substandard conditions.

Today I am introducing the Child Care Quality Improvement Act of 1999, to help states increase and meet their child care quality goals. My bill would provide funding for Quality Improvement Grants to be transferred to local child care collaboratives.

Grants would be made by the Federal government to states which have established goals for child care quality improvements in six areas: increased training for staff, enhanced licensing standards, reduced numbers of unlicensed facilities, increased monitoring and enforcement, reduce caregiver turnover, and higher levels of accreditation. States would then make grants to local child care collaboratives to make quality improvements.

My bill take a benchmarking approach that helps states define quality targets and measures the states' progress toward meeting their long-term quality goals. State plans would be subject to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for approval and monitoring. States would be required to report to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on their progress in meeting their quality goals in order to remain eligible for future funding.

I am introducing this legislation in response to a report by the General Accounting Office (GAO) which found that most states lack strong standards for quality child care, such as requiring a sufficient educational training level of child care workers, keeping child to staff ratios low, and requiring safety and health provision on hand washing and playground equipment safety. The report further concluded that child care center staff turnover—which hurts the quality of care children receive—is very high and is largely due to the extremely low level of pay teachers in child care centers receive.

I have sought the expertise of child care professional and early childhood development specialist across the country, including Dr. Edward Zigler, Sterling Professor of Psychology, former Director of which is now the Administration for Children, Youth and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and founder of the federal Head Start Program. Dr. Zigler tells us that a national policy to encourage an increase in state quality standards is of great value, and that the goal of this legislation—to improve child care services in the states—is both necessary and urgent.

Congress has wrongly refused to require significant quality standards for the child care dollars we allocate each year. The federal government should give states the resources to raise state quality standards and improve child care quality at the local level, but only through a system of measurable indicators of desired outcomes. We must allocate these funds with the guarantee that incentive grants will continue to raise standards and improve the quality of care.

As the father of a young son, I know the difficulty families face when choosing a caregiver for their children. My bill gives families peace of mind by encouraging the state and local facilities across the country to provide the high quality of care every child deserves.

HONORING THE VOLUNTEERS OF ST. MARY'S/GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to recognize the volunteer corps who make up the "backbone" for St. Mary's/Good Samaritan Hospital's Centralia and Mt. Vernon campuses.

Volunteers such as founding member Pat Bunchman, Mercedes Campbell, Barbara Francois, and Pauline Raines, represent some of the longest-serving members of the volunteer group. These hospital auxiliary groups provide volunteer service and funding thus far of \$1 million for patient and hospital equipment since they began their efforts.

Pauline Raines said the volunteering needs "patience," "commitment," and being a "people-person." The ability for these tasks to be put to use and the initiative to implement these programs are a tribute to what the United States stands for. It is a wonderful thing to see American values exhibited in such a benevolent and rewarding program such as the hospital auxiliary groups of St. Mary's/Good Samaritan Hospital.

I applaud their volunteer service, and site it as a testament of volunteerism aiding our communities and enriching our lives.

RECOGNIZING LAMBERTVILLE'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Lambertville, New Jersey's sesquicentennial. Lambertville is a historic town, which has been and continues to be a source of pride for the state of New Jersey. I am proud to represent it in Congress.

Lambertville first grew to prominence as a key stop along the Old York Road, the main route from Philadelphia to New York, in the early 1700's. At the beginning of the 19th century, the building of the Delaware and Raritan Canal helped the town become a leading industrial center for manufacturing. Railroads began to take on much of the canal traffic in the late 1800s, and Lambertville retained its importance as a trade center by serving as the headquarters of the Pennsylvania-Belvidere Railroad. By the turn of the century, more than 3000 factory workers produced such items as wooden wagon wheels, rubber boots, railway cars, bottled beer, and ceramic white ware within the town's borders.

Although Lambertville's factories and mills are closed today, the town continues to thrive. The historic downtown district offers art galleries, antique shops, and a variety of wonderful restaurants. Lambertville retains a colonial charm, with Victorian, Colonial, and Federal styled buildings housing its 4,000 residents. The annual Shad festival in April, a two-day event that marks the arrival of spring and the run of the shad fish upstream to the Delaware River, salutes ongoing efforts to revitalize and maintain the quality of our water.

Lambertville's celebrations of its anniversary will be taking place throughout the summer. In the spring, a documentary on the town will be released.

Lambertville, New Jersey represents the best of small town life. As we look for ways to control development and to create livable communities, Lambertville offers a vibrant, positive example. I urge all my colleagues to join me in recognizing the town of Lambertville on its sesquicentennial.

HONORING THE GRADUATES OF THE 90TH PRECINCT

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I ask you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating special graduates of the 12th Congressional District of New York. I am certain that this day marks the culmination of much effort and hard work which

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